



THE
ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
OF NEW ZEALAND
(INCORPORATED)

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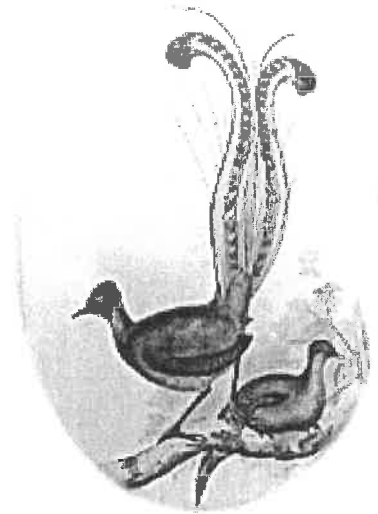
Birding in New South Wales

Towards the end of October, Suzanne & I headed across the Tasman again, this time destined for Sydney. As on our previous visit to Australia, the primary reason for our trip was business, but this time we allocated a fortnight for the pleasure part, i.e., searching for birds. Having already spent time in Queensland and Victoria, we expected to recognize quite a few of the birds we encountered at the outset. This was certainly the case in Sydney, where we visited the Botanic Gardens and Centennial Park. The gardens were quiet birdwise, though scavenging **White Ibis** were conspicuous, and **Dusky Moorhen**, **Coot** and **Chestnut Teal** were present on the ponds. Centennial Park was livelier – first birds were a pair of **Peregrines**, and we also saw **Fairy Martins**, **Figbird**, **Long-billed Corellas** amongst the **Sulphur-crested Cockatoos**, **Black-fronted Dotterel** and **Hardhead**.

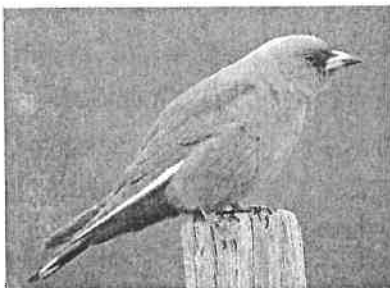


Travelling southwards from the city, our first stop was Royal National Park. Still not as many birds as we were expecting, we added **Lewin's** and **New Holland Honeyeaters**, **Eastern Whipbird**, as well as the first of many **Brown Thornbills** and **White-browed Scrubwrens**. On the Curra Moors a good deal of searching was rewarded with good views of a **Fan-tailed Cuckoo**, along with a brief glimpse of **Variegated Fairy Wren**, and a **White-throated Treecreeper**, whose call we were to become very familiar with over the next few days. Our campsite for the next couple of nights held **Clamorous Reed Warblers**, as well as **Eastern Whipbirds**; after being woken in the night by rain, we were surprised to find the tent and car coated in red dust the following morning.

Next stop was Barren Grounds Nature Reserve. This is home of the rare Ground Parrot and Eastern Bristlebird – we failed to see either, but compensation came in the form of 2 **Pilotbirds**, **Superb Lyrebird**, **Black-faced Monarch** and the highlight of the day, a flyby of 85 **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos**. At nearby Fitzroy Falls, two more **Superb Lyrebirds**, presumably youngsters, did nothing for their image by digging up the main footpath right in front of us!



From here we skirted along the western edge of the Blue Mountains (along a rather interesting road!), adding **Red-kneed Dotterel**, **White-eared** and **Yellow-faced Honeyeaters** (the latter rather common from this point on) and our first **White-winged Choughs**. We spent a couple of days in the Blueys, seeing the sights (when it wasn't raining) and also a few birds and animals. Around Lithgow we found a pair of **Scarlet Robins**, a very quick look at a couple of **Gang Gang Cockatoos**, a few Kangaroos and an impressive pair of Blue-tongued Lizards (who were less impressed with us interrupting their proceedings!) At Blue Gum Swamp we came across **Spotted Pardalote**, which had previously eluded us, and **Common Bronzewing**.



We continued in a north westerly direction, and as the habitat changed from bush to more open country, so did the birds. **Hooded Robin**, **Rainbow Bee-eater**, **Double-barred & Zebra Finches**, **Rufous Songlark**, **Dusky Woodswallow** and **Red-rumped Parrot** all appeared around Glen Davies, though we later discovered that we should have been looking out for Regent Honeyeaters.

En route to Dunn's Swamp we came across **Nankeen Kestrel**, **Masked Woodswallow** and **Wedge-tailed Eagle**; at the swamp itself, the song of what we thought was a Grey Warbler turned out to be that of a **White-throated Gerygone**, while **Striated Pardalote**, **Leaden Flycatcher** and **Hoary-headed Grebe** were all new for the trip. At Munghorn Gap, near Mudgee, we saw the first of several **White-browed Babblers**, a **Speckled Warbler** and a group of **Gang Gangs** at close range.



Westernmost point of the trip was Dubbo – a group of **Scarlet Robins** were apparently the first of the season in the area. We gleaned valuable information from the National Parks & Wildlife Service, which enabled us to see **Glossy Black Cockatoos**, as they came in for their bedtime drink; also in the area we saw several **Emus**, and one of the highlights of the trip, a family group of 4 **Tawny Frogmouths**, doing their best to ignore us. We

returned to Sydney via the Hunter Valley, where the emphasis was on the wineries, but continued adding new birds to the list as we entered the western suburbs of the metropolis, with **Restless Flycatcher** being the final addition.

Richard and Suzanne Schofield

Atlassing in Otago

After four spring seasons we have managed to cover about 78% of Otago. Next September, the commencement of the very last season for the Atlas scheme, might get us over the 80% mark. In the meantime we have a few more weeks to complete the last summer. And next month is the start of the last autumn one. Let's try and cover as much of the squares not as yet visited in autumn.

Again a computerised map of Otago is included in this newsletter.

Peter Schweigman
Atlas coordinator for Otago

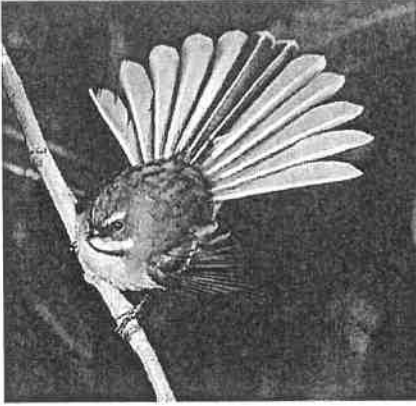
Ornithological Snippets

Richard and Suzanne Schofield saw a female **NZ Scaup** with 4 chicks on the Puerua River pools, near Balclutha on 1/1/04. The same day they spotted a single **Wrybill** at Pounaweia. They also saw 2 **Long-tailed Cuckoo** in the Tahakopa Valley on 30/12/03.



Mary Thompson reports some recent observations from the holidays. One was evening of 23/12/03, near Kelceys Bush, Waimati between 9.30 and 10.00pm. Sue Galloway and she saw a **Little Owl** sitting on a post and stopped to look. It flew a little further along then on to the road, then another, bigger **Little Owl** came down to feed it so they decided the first bird was a fledgling. Then they saw another young bird also on the ground and bobbing up and down and calling "Scree" and eventually an adult returned to feed again but by then it was getting too dark to see any more.

Then on 8/1/04, coming home via Temuka, Mary and Sue went down to the Opihi estuary/lagoon in the evening-clear and NW wind. A small selection of birds on a sand/gravel bank: **Black Swan**, ducks, **Black Shags**, plovers, dotterel, and about 30-40 **Pied Stilts**. Closer inspection revealed one **Black Stilt** with them, the first time Mary had seen a **Black Stilt** other than at Twizel. The next day they stopped off at Ki Wainono and saw 3 hybrid **Black Stilts**; one almost black, still some white/grey underneath, and two with all black on back and complete black collars. The real **Pied Stilts** had obvious white shoulders went viewed front on feeding so the hybrids seemed easy to spot.



In the weeks prior to Christmas Mary spotted **Fantails** building their nest in a pine tree in the Botanic Gardens, and one lunchtime saw the pair changeover the incubation. Everything was very quiet before the event, then loud calling and the **Fantail** appeared and flitting around the nest tree. Very quickly this bird disappeared and the sitting bird appeared to take its place; a casual onlooker would have thought it was the same bird and only one flying about. Mary also managed to see a few feeding sessions the next week; she thinks there were

two chicks. She saw one fledgling being fed the next week but possibly there was another as the young bird was very quiet and hard to spot. She felt really lucky to see it.

Programme 2004

The indoor meetings are held in the Otago Art Society Building on the corner of Great King and Albany Streets starting at 8 p.m.

Wednesday, 25 February	Indoor Meeting	Speaker: Diane Campbell-Hunt Topic: The Orokonui Sanctuary
Wednesday, 28 April	Indoor Meeting	Speaker: Derek Onley Topic: A Visit to Mexico
Wednesday, 7 July	Science Festival Meeting	Speaker: Bruce McKinlay Topic: Kakapo on Codfish Island

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